

VETERANS' VOICES

A Virtual Creativity Magazine by Residents of the New Hampshire Veterans Home
Volume One, Number Two, June 2007



Don Piehl, NHVH Resident and Artist, Page 8

Beating A Phobia...



Ever since I was five, I've had a phobia about motorcycles.

Without getting into the reason why I became scared at the sound of a revving motorcycle, I would suddenly stop doing whatever I was doing, and freeze. I listened to whether the sound was just going by or if it was coming to me.

The closer it came, the more I would begin to shake and my breathing would become more shallow and fast. My heart would quicken and soon I was up on my feet looking for a safe haven, away from the noise.

This phobia followed me into adulthood. I could approach a motorcycle lying idle at its spot, but with a sharp eye watching it closely.

On the road, when one would pull up behind me, I would move over to the shoulder of the road until it had passed me, even if I had to wait for several other cars to get ahead of me.

It had been a phobia that has caused me many emotional times between myself and other passengers in my vehicle, or in other vehicles coming up behind me.

Many of my friends had cycles, even my children and their spouses had them, but even then I would have to stay put until the cycle was turned off and it was safe to go out and meet them.

This day, June 11, 2006 was the Poker Run at NHVH, and I told myself that I was going to try to beat my phobia.

Hesitantly, I proceeded out to the pavilion where some 60-80 motorcycles were gathered. I arrived to the area somewhat nervous and sweaty, as I arrived by the sitting motorcycles, I would approach them and look them over.

Then as others arrived I would roll my wheelchair to the protection of the pavilion until it was safe to go out again and view the different styles. While viewing the motorcycles, I would talk to the different owners. During one conversation with one of the U.S. Marines Riders, I became aware that these riders were Vietnam Veterans that served in Nam the same time I did. As we talked and reminisced about time 37 years ago, I forgot that we were standing in the middle of a parking lot where motorcycles were coming and going. The noise was not there, my breathing was normal, and I was not frozen to my spot.

Where was my phobia? I thought I had it beat until Tulsa, Road Warrior, Pa Pa-Son, and several others asked if I would like to go on the run with them. Well! I found my phobia again.

Though now I am able to not fear the sound of a motorcycle, I am not ready to get on one.

Maybe next year.

Thanks U.S. Marines Riders

David Clark

Our Corn Plant (Dracaena-Fragrans Massangeana)

By Arthur Foley,
Veterans Voices Reporter



The corn plant that you see in this picture is in the NH Veterans Home greenhouse in Tilton, NH.

Victor Dennis, NHVH resident and greenhouse volunteer, says that in all the years he has been here the plant has never bloomed. We estimate that the plant is about seven (7) years old.

The corn plant bloomed on April 28, 2007, with a long green bract [a modified or specialized leaf, from the axil of which a flower or flower stalk arises], turning like white snowballs on May 12. The plant is eight feet tall, so I could not smell its fragrance, which is quite pungent.

My name is Arthur Foley and I was shown the corn plant by Lynda LaFountain, Recreation Worker, on February 1, 2007, three days after I arrived at the Veterans Home.

I'm sure you'll enjoy seeing this corn plant in the greenhouse. All are welcome!

I hope I have interested you in my description of this corn plant.

Sincerely,
Arthur R. Foley
NH Veterans Home
Tilton, NH

Arthur Foley is a veteran of World War II and has lived at the Veterans Home since late January, 2007. He served in the 79th Infantry Division of the 3rd Army from 1942 to 1945 under Gen. George Patton as a Service Truck Driver and a 50 caliber machine gunner. Arthur vividly remembers being part of the D-Day 3 invasion of Normandy, with artillery shells exploding all around him. He says, "Lady Luck was with me!"



Shoulder Sleeve Insignia of the 79th Infantry Division

What does Tai-Chi Chuan mean?

Researched by Arthur Foley from the website "General Kung fu"



Tai-Chi Chuan is a wonderful martial art. Besides being very effective for combat, it is also excellent for health promotion and spiritual cultivation. Many people, however, are not aware of its combative and spiritual aspects. Even those who practice Tai-Chi Chuan solely for health often do not get the best benefits of its health aspect.

The term Tai-Chi Chuan is a short form of Taiji Quanfa. Taiji is the Chinese word meaning "the grand ultimate" or the cosmos and quanfa means fist techniques or martial art. Tai-Chi Chuan therefore means "cosmos kung fu" -- indeed every movement in Tai-Chi Chuan is made according to martial considerations.

Arthur participates in Tai-Chi three mornings a week at the Veterans Home. He says, "It keeps me limber and makes me feel good. It is very relaxing, especially when we do it to the Chinese flute music."

Baked Beans and Brown Bread



Baked beans and brown bread come each and every Saturday at noon.
This I look forward to patiently; that day cannot come too soon.

I must deny myself the frankfurter because of the fat content within.
So I get one half a hamburger instead. However with great chagrin.

Someone changed the menu; hamburg, mashed potatoes, green beans
are placed upon my plate. Temperature upon my brow really steams.

Even though I try my very best as I allow for each honest error,
I must admit to my abundant human feeling to create sheer terror.

However, sensibility, rationality, reality; love must come to the fore.
While scheming a scheme to rectify with a trip to the nearest store.

Then find hope and thinking positive, look forward to next week again.
To end these episodes of erupting frustrations and happily say amen.

May 11, 2002

Charlie Safford



Veterans Helping Veterans--A Letter to Our Troops

April 28, 2007

Dear Hero,

I'm writing from the New Hampshire Veterans Home and we wish we could replace you and you could rotate stateside. By and large, the population is in support of what you are doing. Unfortunately, there are always a few crazies who are anti-everything. They do not represent the feelings of the general population. We support and pray for your safe return daily. Many of us have been in similar situations and realize the hardships you endure. We await your safe return, and you make us proud.

X- GI and fervent supporter

Good will and good luck,

Bob Blanchard

CARE

By: Richard Mumblo, March 3, 2006

It's hard to write about all the good things that take place here. From all the staff down to the last person in the building. To all of the nurse's aids that give us care, and the housekeeping girls who do a great job keeping our home clean and organized.

Fantastic~ this word has a lot of meaning for me. I use it all the time regarding the care I get here. The nurses and the aids do so much for us. I want to express them more and get all I really want to say said better.



MORE CARE

By: Richard Mumblo, March 7, 2006

The last time I wrote I missed a very important part of what I need to say. I passed up on the kitchen help. The girls and guys do a great job with the preparation of the meals. They are the best.

So, from a guy who likes to eat, I thank you from the bottom of my heart.



The Blue Volcano



A Quickening Wind Home



Headlands: Marin, California

Veterans Voices Gallery

Don Piehl,
Artist and Resident



Don Piehl is a Veteran of World War II. In the US Army Air Corps he "did a lot of training with code and radios, and not much more." Don attended art school and teachers college, but left to take a civil service job, from which he retired.

Over the years, Don kept up with his artwork, but never as steadily as now. Before coming to NHVH over one year ago, Don lived at the Manchester, NH VA.

The Road of Life

As I watch the sunset slip quietly into night,
my mind wanders back to yesteryear,
to other sunsets and star-filled nights,
and memories so very dear.

As I walk the pathways of my life,
it seems some roads were paved with gold,
while others were rough and filled with pain and the heartaches that life holds.

I've know the joys of being a husband and father,
and seeing a new life begin its journey.

I've shed many a tear when I had to say
good-bye, never to see that face again.

I've know what it was like to awake to a kiss and smile from the woman I loved.

I've heard the sweet laughter from my children at play,
and the cooing of a dove.

I'm happy- there's a smile on my face, for the good years outnumber the bad,

and I know it comes from God's loving
grace that I've been blessed with the good
life I've had.



David Clark

4-8-06

I have lost me

There are a lot of windows here
for me to look outside.
I see the people in this room so very clear,
but who are they? I know not, I must confide.

Why am I here and where am I?
People in white always put me before this scene
and I spend the time watching a little fly
while I ponder if my clothes are blue or green.

Did my children visit yesterday?
Was it the day before?
I hope they did, I miss them today.
I can't remember, my mind seems somewhat sore.

As each day passes and weeks turn into months,
it becomes much harder to do
a simple thing. I feel like a dunce.
I wonder, who am I? Who?

I used to eat all by myself
and enjoy the pleasant taste of it.
Now myself is up on a shelf
and I don't even notice the waste of it.

Once I accomplished real good things,
followed my dreams,
fathered my family, with love that brings
togetherness, found by no other means.

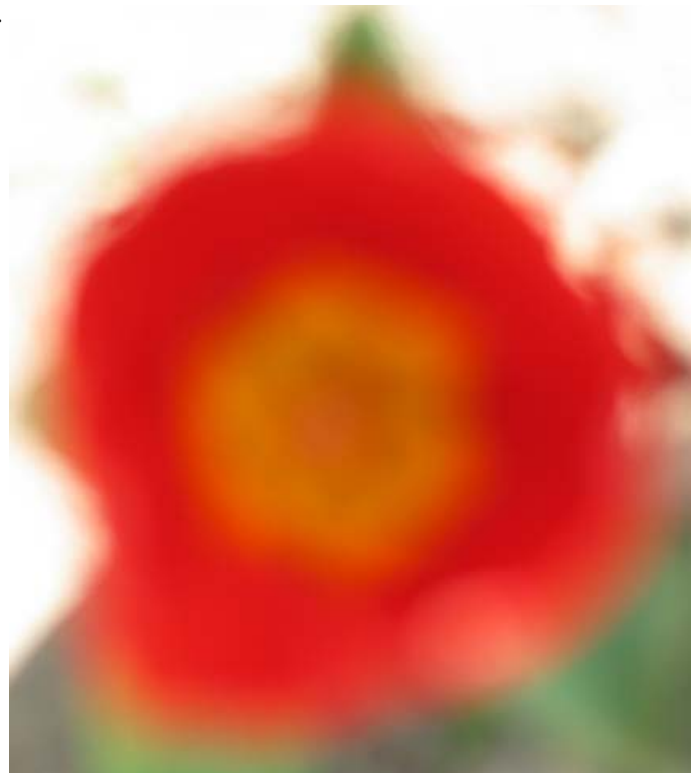
Something happened, I know not why,
but here I am lonely and sad.
I wish I knew as I quietly cry
when I hear that woman say hello, Dad.

Confusion ends when life is over.
Peace arrives when that day comes
and I am laid amidst the clover
with loving care from daughters and sons.



*Dedicated in honest affection to my good friends
in any dementia facility
anywhere.*

Charles R. Safford . . . NHVH, Tilton, NH . . . 10-27-2003



THE DOG MUSHER

I recall when I was a young lad,
I was first introduced to the sport of running the dogs.



When the musher turned sick, the team
owner asked me to take his place.
I had already given up my gloves and
boots to another musher.
So reluctantly and bewildered, I wobbled
to the start where six rowdy and
entangled dogs awaited to be free.
The lead dog stopped his fight with the
dog behind him and glazed at me as I
prepared my stance, after watching other
musher's.

I was fifth team to approach the start line,
eager but nervous, standing behind a team of dogs that felt my nervousness.

When the time came to begin my run, the dogs, all six of them launched
forward with such tremendous force that it flung me backward, landing me on
my backside so hard that I felt the shudder clear up to my already frozen
hands.

I sat there, only looking at the backside of the running dogs pulling an empty
sled.

By: David Clark, March 6, 2006
1963- Laconia, New Hampshire

Winter, spring, summer and fall,
From our window we see it all.

Winter the ice will put on a show,
As for the sun or the moon, they reflect above the snow.

Then in spring the birds move in,
We shut the window to stifle the din.

Then comes grass so green,
And we listen to the mowing machine.

We see the leaves gathering along the wall,
So we know it must be fall.

By: Forrest Foley
April 16, 2007



Life here at the Veterans Home is great,
But only if you participate.
The girls are fun,
But most of the time, are on the run.
The men are good too,
Although there are a few.
Lunches out are really great,
Though sometimes you have to wait.
If you're not on the list,
You just stand by and wish.
Many trips we get to take,
It is for mental sake.
The lakes and farms are really pretty,
but the roads are rough and the bus seats are hard.
Though stiff and sore,
We are ready for more.

By: Forrest Foley,
March 6, 2006

Paintings by Armand Tremblay



Nighttime Serenity



Kettle Rock, Arizona



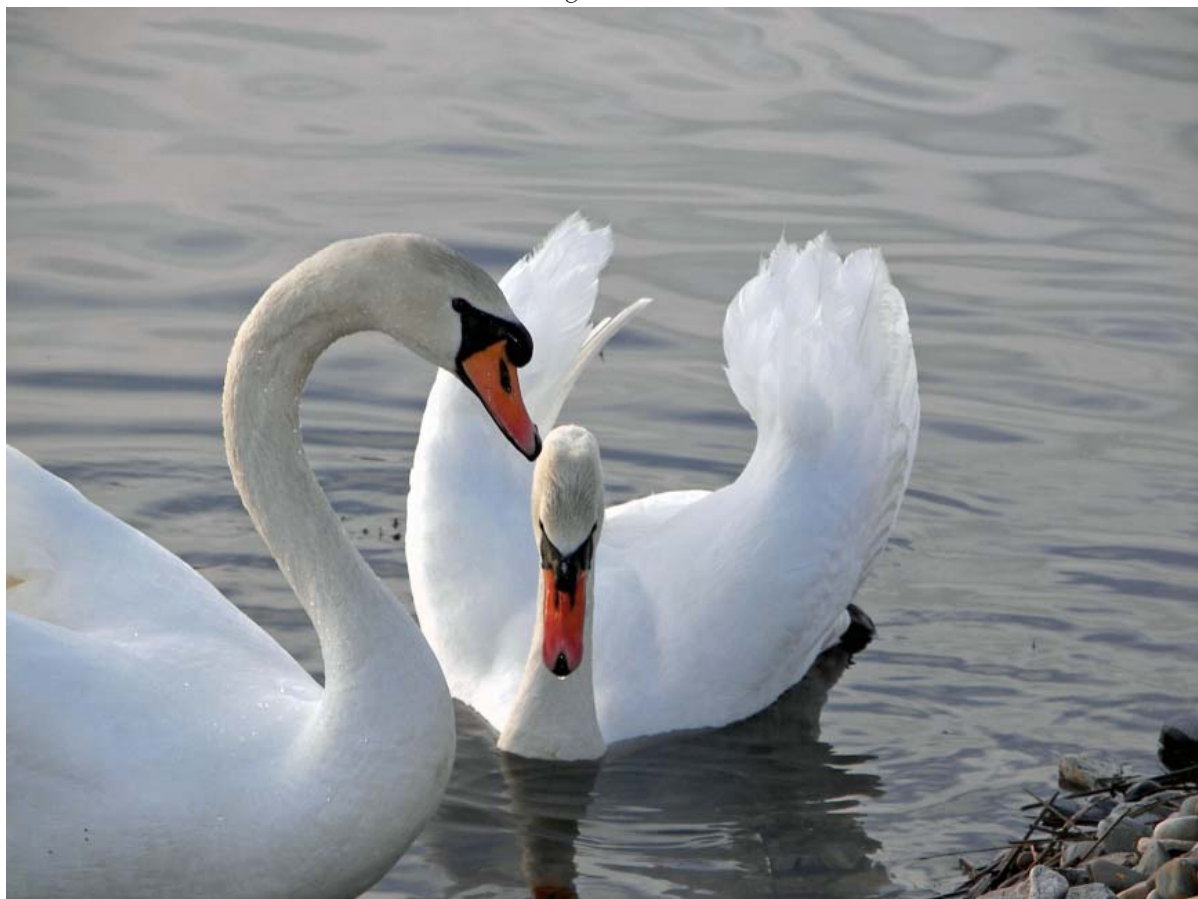
Sandy's Beach



Yosemite



Photos by Phil Walton





Capt Phil C. Walton USAFR (Ret.) was born on Nov. 12, 1944 in Miami, Florida. Raised in the Miami area, he graduated from Miami-Dade Community College with an A.S. 1966, Florida Atlantic University with a BS in 1968 and the University of Montana in 1974 with an MBA. He served in the US Air Force from 1968 to 1979, Strategic Air Command (SAC), Minuteman Missile Combat Crew Commander & Deputy 1970 -1974. System Supervisor, Strategic Automated Command Control System, HQ SAC 1974 - 1979. Database Administrator of F15CDS & F16CDS, Dynamics Research Corp under contract from Air Force Special Projects Office. 1984 – 1992. Phil has been a resident of the New Hampshire Veterans Home since Feb. 17, 1998.